

FACTSHEET

Plant Protection & Quarantine

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Animal and
Plant Health
Inspection
Service

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Don't Pack A Pest

The Mediterranean fruit fly quarantine of the western portion of Hillsborough County is still in effect. The regulated area is bordered by I-75 on the east, Tampa Bay, Racetrack Road, and the northern part of Veterans Highway on the west, and from the Hillsborough-Pasco line on the north to the MacDill/Riverview area on the south.

Since the Tampa International Airport is inside the regulated area, absolutely no homeowner (backyard) fruit may move out of that airport. All such fruit will be confiscated because it cannot be ascertained whether homegrown fruit came from within or outside the regulated area. Movement of citrus fruit commercially packed in the original, unopened container will be allowed, providing the passenger presents an itemized sales receipt. Several additional U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) officers are located in various places throughout the airport.

USDA asks homeowners not to distribute or sell backyard fruit to neighbors or friends to prevent inadvertent spread of Medfly eggs or larvae that may be in the fruit to other areas of Florida. We need everyone's cooperation to ensure the eradication of the Medfly in the Tampa area.

Questions and Answers:

Q. If I live outside the regulated area, can I ship my backyard fruit by ground or air transport (e.g., Federal Express, United Parcel Service) from their main hubs inside the regulated area?

A. If you can prove that you live outside the regulated area and also boxed the fruit outside the regulated area, you can ship it through commercial carriers inside the regulated area.

Q. Can I drive my car with fruit from my back yard to other areas of the country without causing a problem?

A. No. If the fruit is grown inside the regulated area, there may be a possibility of spreading Medflies to other areas of Florida or the United States.

Q. Why am I allowed to ship backyard fruit from the St. Petersburg airport but not from Tampa airport?

A. The Tampa Airport is located inside the regulated area. Homeowners inside the regulated area are urged not to move their fruit from any transportation center outside the regulated area as well.

Q. Can I spray my backyard fruit with pesticides and receive approval from USDA to ship it out like commercial shippers?

A. No. Commercial growers must have certified grove caretakers licensed to apply pesticides treat the groves every 7-10 days, beginning 30 days prior to and continuing throughout the harvest. This is being allowed only in commercial operations because each application must be monitored by USDA personnel to ensure compliance. USDA does not have enough personnel to allow this exemption for backyard trees.

Q. Can charitable organizations distribute backyard fruits and vegetables from the regulated area?

A. Yes, but Medfly host fruit and vegetables harvested inside the regulated area may be distributed only to charitable organizations inside the regulated area. Distribution of regulated fruit is restricted and must go only to charitable organizations where the fruit is consumed on site.